Art in Rome

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From Antiquity to the Present

By

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For my father, Dr. Edwin P. Menes, who taught at
Loyola University Chicago's Rome Center three times and whose
passion inspired me. You were the true master of Rome.

And for Charles. *Ti amo*.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, without my father, this book would not exist. As a nine-year-old girl, I lived in Rome while my father taught at Loyola University Chicago's Rome Center. I attended an Italian school, explored the city, and fell in love with Rome. In high school and college, I tried to learn everything I could about Rome's history, art, and culture. Following in my father's footsteps, I eventually became a college professor and have had the opportunity to teach in a study abroad program in Italy. I hope that I continue my father's legacy and his love of Rome, and this book is my love letter to both.

I would also like to acknowledge the unrivaled Jesuit education that nurtured my love for all things Roman. At Saint Ignatius College Prep in Chicago, I completed four years of Latin and three years of ancient Greek. At Xavier University and Loyola University Chicago, I took courses on ancient philosophy, history, art, topography, Greek, and Latin. Eventually I received a BA Classics, a special degree that reflects a well-rounded humanistic education based in classical studies. I am thankful for this Jesuit education and its emphasis on the humanities and their importance.

I must also acknowledge my beloved study abroad alma mater, the John Felice Rome Center of Loyola University Chicago. In the fall of 1998, I returned to Rome as a college student. During this pivotal time, I decided to change my major to art history. John Nicholson, the preeminent and esteemed art history professor at JFRC, inspired me to do so, as I followed him around in my onsite "Art in Rome" course. I wanted to be like him and I still do.

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INTRODUCTION

Art in Rome is specifically designed to accompany a fifteen week on-site, study abroad course. Each week of the semester, the class meets on-site at a spot in Rome and each chapter within this book is designed to accompany one class that is roughly three hours. Hence, this book contains this introduction and fourteen chapters, corresponding to a typical fifteen-week semester. Within each of the fourteen main chapters, instructors can pick and choose which monuments to take their students to, depending on his or her expertise, interest, or amount of time. This introduction is a brief overview of the historical periods of Rome from antiquity to the present and briefly explores the most important art historical developments from each of the major time periods.

As much as possible, this textbook is arranged chronologically, beginning with the art of ancient Rome and moving through the Early Christian and Medieval periods and into the Renaissance and Baroque era, and finally to modern Rome. But because each class takes place in a specific location of Rome, the topography and location of important art historical sites is also taken into consideration, which means that sometimes not all artworks in a chapter are from the same historical era. For example, Chapter Two covers mostly ancient monuments, including the Imperial Fora and the ruins atop the Palatine Hill. But because of its proximity to this area, the nineteenth century Vittore Emanuele Monument is also discussed, along with Benito Mussolini's fascist construction of the Via dei Fori Imperiali.

Topography of Rome

The city of Rome was originally comprised of seven main hills, though the urban landscape today has many additional hills. The **Palatine Hill** is one of the major central hills in Rome and from the city's beginning, it was one of the most important, mainly because this was the location where the first king of Rome, Romulus, founded the city. Throughout the Roman Republic and Empire, the Palatine Hill continued to be important, especially as a place to construct lavish palaces. In fact, the word Palatine derives from the Latin word for palace. Nestled above the Forum Romanum, the Palatine is the site of the ruins of the palaces and villas of

famous Roman emperors and empresses, including Augustus and his wife Livia.

Adjacent to the Forum Romanum, and just north of the Palatine, is the **Capitoline Hill**, the steepest of the seven hills of ancient Rome. Because of this, the Capitoline was utilized early on as a fortress against enemies. For example, during the Gallic sack of Rome in 390 BCE, only the Capitoline Hill resisted the invasion. Later in the Republic, the Capitoline became the most sacred hill of Rome and was home to the **Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus**, which no longer exists. If one visits the Capitoline Hill today, it is the Renaissance renovation of that hill that he or she will see. Michelangelo re-designed the Capitoline Hill's piazza, which was decorated with an ancient bronze equestrian sculpture of Marcus Aurelius. Today, the three villas atop the Capitoline are home to museums that house many of Rome's ancient sculptural masterpieces.

The remaining five hills are the **Quirinal Hill**, which is the northernmost of the seven hills. Today, the Quirinal is the seat of Italian government, home to the Palazzo Quirinale. The **Viminal Hill** is Rome's smallest hill; today it is home to Termini, the major train station of Rome. The **Esquiline Hill** is on the eastern part of the city and is one of the largest of the seven mounds. South of the Esquiline is the **Caelian Hill**, where many of the wealthy patricians lived during the Roman Republic. Finally, the **Aventine Hill** is just southwest of the Palatine Hill. In ancient Rome, this is where the plebeians lived. As Rome's history progressed, additional hills, like the Janiculum and the Vatican, just across the Tiber River, would be added to the topography of Rome.

Nestled between these seven hills are many valleys, most notably the marshy one where the Forum Romanum now sits (within the Palatine, Capitoline, and Esquiline). The area of the Colosseum, once home to Nero's famed Domus Aurea, is the valley amongst the Palatine, Esquiline, and Caelian. And the Campus Martius, which houses many funerary monuments of the emperors, is a large plain next to the Tiber River.

The Romans were famous for their construction of roads. During the Roman Empire, massive system of roads were made that connected the huge empire. The city of Rome also had several major arteries, including the famous **Via Appia Antica**, which was constructed during the Republic. The Via Appia Antica began at the Circus Maximus and eventually wound its way outside Rome, where it was lined with tombs. Eventually, the Via Appia Antica terminated at the southeastern port city of Brindisi. Within Rome, the most important road was the **Via Sacra** which was one of the major streets within the Forum Romanum and was lined with many basilicas, temples, and government buildings.

About fifteen miles west of Rome is the ancient port city of **Ostia Antica**. Today, Ostia Antica offers a respite from the busy hubbub of Rome and is accessible via rail. The harbor city is worth a visit, especially if one does not have time to travel south to the ruins of Pompeii. Ostia, like Pompeii, gives the visitor the idea of what a Roman town looked like, with its roads, theaters, temples, homes, brothels, and artistic decoration, including many monochromatic mosaics.

A Brief History of Ancient Rome

The city of Rome has a long history that spans many centuries before the Roman Empire began in the late first century BCE. According to legend, Rome was founded by Romulus, the first king of Rome, in 753 BCE. At the time of Romulus' birth, Italy was comprised of separate kingdoms. King Numitor was the king of Alba Longa. His daughter, Rhea Silvia, was violated by the god Mars, which resulted in pregnancy and the birth of twin boys, Romulus and Remus. Amulius, King Numitor's brother, was displeased with the arrival of the twins because this demoted him to third in line for the throne. As a result, Amulius kidnapped the twins and planned their demise by placing them within a basket and floating it out into the Tiber River.

Little did Amulius know that the twins would not drown. Instead, their basket floated to shore where the boys were rescued by a she-wolf who suckled them herself to keep the babies alive. Eventually, Faustalus, a shepherd, found Romulus and Remus. He and his wife, Acca Larentia, raised the boys. In 753 BCE, Romulus founded Rome, naming the city after himself, and he became the first king of Rome, though not before murdering his own twin brother.

From 753-509 BCE, Rome was ruled by a succession of seven kings: Romulus, Numa Pompilius, Tullus Hostiius, Ancus Marcius, Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, Servius Tullus, and Lucius Tarquinius Superbus. Each king had absolute power and the citizens of Rome were sharply divided into classes. At the top were the patricians or noble class. The plebians were the lower classes and at the very bottom of the social strata were the slaves.

In 509 BCE, the monarchy was overthrown and the Roman Republic began. A republican system of government was established, which lasted until 27 BCE. There were still patricians and plebeians in the Republic and the society, despite no longer having a king, was still one where the power rested in the hands of few people. The Republic had two consuls who were

elected every year by the citizens of Rome. In addition, Rome had a Senate.

Despite having elected positions, the Roman Republic did not take long to develop cracks in its armor. First, it was during the Republic that Rome started expanding its territory, including parts of Italy, northern Africa, along with other parts of Europe. This meant that by the second century BCE, Rome had essentially grown from a city-state into a massive empire. Because of this growth of territory and power, civil wars broke out frequently as individuals vied for sole power of Rome. Julius Caesar was one of those people. He wanted to be the first emperor of Rome and very nearly succeeded before being assassinated in 44 BCE. Eventually, Julius Caesar's adopted grandnephew, Octavian, would become the first emperor of Rome in 27 BCE, when the Senate bestowed upon him the moniker "Augustus," or the "revered one."

Augustus' Julio Claudian family line would continue until 68 CE, with the death of Nero. Augustus had no sons and thus throughout his reign there was always a question as to who would succeed him. Originally, Augustus desired Gaius and Lucius Caesar, his young nephews, but both tragically died young. Eventually, probably due to the encouragement of his wife, Livia, Tiberius was named successor (he was Livia's son and therefore Augustus' stepson). Following Tiberius, Caligula was emperor briefly before being assassinated; he was not well-liked. Claudius and Nero rounded out the Julio-Claudian empire.

Following Nero's suicide in 68 CE, a year of civil strife ensued as various families vied for the throne. The Flavian dynasty eventually won; the family consisted of Vespasian, the patriarch, and his two sons, Titus and Domitian. The Flavians, both the father and sons, frequently legitimized their right to rule by advertising their victory in the Jewish Wars, which was documented by Josephus. The Temple of Jerusalem was sacked during this victory and Vespasian and Titus brought the loot back to Rome, displayed it in a triumphal procession, and ultimately used it to finance building projects in the city. While the family's reign was brief and ended with the death of Domitian in 96, the Flavians nevertheless left a lasting impression on the city, most notably due to the construction of the Colosseum, or Flavian Amphitheater.

Additional civil wars erupted with the end of the Flavian dynasty and eventually Nerva became emperor. But the height of the Roman Empire began with Trajan, who was born in Spain. Trajan was responsible for expanding the empire to its greatest extent through his many conquests, most notably in Dacia (modern-day Romania). Hadrian ruled next and he is famous for being the best traveled of the Roman emperors. A

philhellene to the core, Hadrian loved Greek art, architecture, history, and culture. He often used art to express this love of the Greeks. Married to Sabina, Hadrian had a young male lover as well, Antinous, who tragically died when he drowned in the Nile River of Egypt while on a cruise.

The Antonine family also ruled during the height of the empire, in the first quarter of the second century CE. Antoninus Pius, the patriarch of the family, was the adopted son of Hadrian and sought to continue the greatness of his predecessors. Marcus Aurelius, the adopted son of Antoninus Pius, succeeded to the throne at a time when the Empire was just beginning its decline. The most contemplative of the Roman emperors, Marcus Aurelius wrote *Meditations*. Because the empire was becoming increasingly difficult to rule alone, Marcus Aurelius made Lucius Verus and then Commodus his co-rulers.

At the end of the second century CE, the Severan dynasty took control and ruled from 193-235 CE. From Leptis Magna in modern-day Libya, the patriarch was Septimius Severus followed by his two sons, Caracalla and Geta. Like emperors before them, the Severans built on a grand scale, both in Rome and in Leptis Magna. Geta, who co-ruled with his father and then his brother, was murdered in 211. A hated emperor, his art was subjected to *damnatio memoriae*, or a destruction of memory. Artistic depictions of Geta were routinely destroyed. Caracalla, Geta's brother, ruled until he was murdered by one of his praetorian guards, allegedly as he was urinating while traveling. Another much despised emperor, Caracalla was just another reason why the Roman Empire was declining.

The history of the third century CE is complicated, as numerous so-called soldier-emperors succeeded to the throne and then were routinely assassinated. Sometimes referred to as the crisis of the third century, the period from 235 to 285 had more than twenty-five emperors, which was roughly one every two years. Most of these emperors were not even elected by the Roman Senate. Instead, they were proclaimed emperor by their troops.

The third century descended into chaos until Diocletian, a general from Split, Croatia, gained control of the Roman Empire in 284 and established the Tetrarchy, or "rule by four." Because the Roman Empire was so vast, it was becoming increasingly difficult for only one person to rule. Communication was difficult and it was also hard to maintain order in the provinces. Thus, with the Tetrarchy, Diocletian envisioned the Roman Empire being ruled by four men. Divided into the Western Empire, with Rome as its capital, and the Eastern Empire, which had Byzantium (soon to be Constantinople and then Istanbul) as its capital city, two emperors would rule each half, one senior (Augustus) and one junior (Caesar). Each

emperor was charged with the responsibility of a specific area, and therefore the empire became much easier to handle and maintain.

The tetrarchy worked for approximately twenty years. But as was often the case in Roman history, there was again a desire by some to have complete, sole control. After Diocletian retired to his sprawling palace in Split in 305 CE, the Tetrarchy ended. Civil war again waged as people vied for the throne; Constantine was one of these that desired sole power. He set about conquering his rivals, and one of his most famous victories was at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in Rome in 312 CE, where he beat Maxentius. Constantine attributed his victory over the stronger Maxentius to the Christian god, who, according to the writer Eusebius, came as a vision to Constantine the night before battle, showing him the chi rho device and telling him, "In this sign, conquer." The next day, Constantine affixed the chi rho symbol, which combines the first two Greek letters of Christ's name, to his shields and pennants. Miraculously, Constantine beat Maxentius and as a result, he became Christian. By 325, Constantine defeated his last opponent and became sole emperor. Often Constantine is regarded as the first Christian Roman emperor, but he did not fully convert to Christianity until his deathbed. Instead, the emperor hedged his bets, placating both Christians and pagans during his rule.

Constantine was instrumental in the continued popularity of Christianity, a religion that had been around for three centuries by that point. Simple and direct in its teachings, Christianity was appealing to many because it was easy to understand and it promised life everlasting. Prior to Constantine, Christians were persecuted in Rome and therefore had to hide their religion. But under the Edict of Milan of 313, which legalized Christianity and promoted the tolerance of all religions, the Christians could freely worship. Constantine was instrumental in building some of the first Christian churches in Rome, including its most important, St. Peter's.

After Constantine, every emperor was Christian. In 410 CE, the Visogoths sacked Rome, thus bring the Western Roman Empire to an end. The Eastern Empire, based in the newly named Constantinople, after Constantine, would continue until 1453 with its Ottoman conquest. Thus, while Rome might have fallen, the Eastern Empire, also called the Byzantine Empire, would continue for the next millennium.

Seven Kings of Rome

- Romulus 753-715 BCE
- Numa Pompilius 715-673 BCE

- Tullius Hostilius 673-642 BCE
- Ancus Marcius 642-617 BCE
- Tarquinius Priscus 617-579 BCE
- Servius Tullius 579-535 BCE
- Tarquinius Superbus 534-510 BCE

Roman Emperors

Julio-Claudian Dynasty

- Augustus 27 BCE – 14 CE
- Tiberius 14-37 CE
- Caligula 37-41 CE
- Claudius 41-54 CE
- Nero 54-68 CE

Flavian Dynasty:

- Vespasian 69-79 CE
- Titus 79-81 CE
- Domitian 81-96 CE

Antonines

- Trajan 98-117 CE
- Hadrian 117-138 CE
- Antoninus Pius 138-161 CE
- Marcus Aurelius 161-180 CE
- Lucius Verus 161-169 CE
- Commodus 180-192 CE

Severan Dynasty

- Septimius Severus 193-211 CE
- Caracalla 211-217 CE
- Geta 211-211 CE

Late Third Century and Fourth Century

- Diocletian 284-305 CE
- Constantine 306-337 CE

A Brief History of Roman Art

If one wanted to summarize imperial Roman art, it is influenced by the Greeks and all about power, politics, and propaganda. In terms of its Greek influences, the Romans did not just slavishly copy the Greek art that they so admired but transformed it into a new Roman vocabulary, shaping it to serve their own purposes. Greek influences like the classical orders were translated into new Roman terms. For example, the Romans adopted the post and lintel architectural system but added engaged columns to it. The Romans also added their own new type of architectural system, one that was based on the arch. In short, the post and lintel system had limitations in how high one could build and the Romans wanted tall structures without interior supports. Ann arch better distributed the weight to the ground, which allowed the Romans to create massive interior spaces without using interior supports.

The Romans also changed the type of building materials. While they still utilized stone, the Romans added a new, groundbreaking material to their repertoire: concrete. With several distinct advantages over stone, like its lightness, malleability, and lower cost, concrete allowed the Romans, along with the arch, to start thinking about architecture in new, revolutionary ways. The arch, and barrel vaults, groin vaults, and domes, are ubiquitous throughout Roman architecture. In addition, to save on costs, buildings were often revetted, or covered with, expensive materials like marble or travertine while behind this were less costly materials like bricks and concrete. This is visible in the Colosseum, where much of the more expensive travertine was removed to be used in other building sites, leaving the bricks underneath exposed.

The buildings of Rome were often covered, inside and out, with various types of art. From architectural and freestanding sculpture to mosaics and wall paintings, Roman art was focused on power, politics, and propaganda. Emperors, beginning with Augustus, realized the power images had to persuade and thus exploited art to express their ideologies. Art was utilized to legitimize an emperor's right to rule, whether he was the son, adopted son, or a member of a new dynasty. Typically, a way to emphasize the emperor's power was to advertise a military victory or other major accomplishment in an artwork, which would then be displayed publicly for the entire city to see. Sometimes, a new emperor would connect himself back to his predecessor, or even stretch further back to someone like Augustus, trying to strengthen the link to past rulers. On other occasions, an emperor either subtly or overtly referred to their divine lineage, or connection to the gods. In this manner, the viewer would

undoubtedly be impressed by the emperor having the gods on his side, or in later cases, a deity himself.

Regular Romans also commissioned art, whether a freed slave with new wealth who could afford a tomb along the Via Appia Antica, or a wealthy patrician who wanted to show allegiance to the emperor. Like imperial art, non-imperial artistic commissions sought to communicate the patron's status, taste, and political connections. While most of the sections in this book focus on imperial art, there are a couple examples of art commissioned by everyday Romans.

As in architecture, the Romans were highly influenced by the Greeks in other arts as well, though they put their own spin on this influence. While the Greeks preferred allegory, staying away from showing specific battles (as can be evidenced in the metopes of the Parthenon), the Romans were always about specificity. They wanted to show themselves, their accomplishments, and their battles. Consequently, in Roman art, specific historical figures, battles, and events can more easily be identified.

One thing that the Romans adopted from the Greeks was the classicizing, naturalistic style. The Greeks placed a high value on illusionism and their art developed towards the attainment of that naturalism, as can be seen in Classical, Late Classical, and Hellenistic art. The Romans picked up where the Greeks left off and for much of the Roman Republic and Empire, the art is highly naturalistic. Proportions of figures are realistic (though sometimes the proportions of figures to buildings is off) and a recession in space is clear. Sometimes the figures are idealized, meaning they appear perfect. Other emperors sometimes depicted themselves more realistically, like the veristic (hyper-realistic) sculptures of the Republic. In these cases, the age of the person is emphasized, with every wrinkle clearly delineated.

As the Roman Empire progressed, though, a change occurred. A less naturalistic style came to dominate, particularly by the late second century CE: the proportions of figures become short and stocky; space is depicted by overlapping and stacking; there are multiple groundlines; all the figures look almost the same. This less naturalistic style is not a reflection of talent, or lack thereof, but rather that there was a desire for something different and that the artists did not value naturalism as they had in the past. By the fourth century CE, this less naturalistic style dominated art and would do so, though there are certainly exceptions to the rule, until the dawning of the Renaissance.

A Brief History of Medieval Art in Rome

The Medieval period, which lasts roughly from 400-1400 CE in Europe, is alternately called the Middle Ages and the Dark Ages. After the sack of Rome in 410 CE and the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Italy was then part of the Byzantine Empire and the Holy Roman Empire. By the ninth century CE, the papacy in Rome came to dominate and would be the driving force in artistic creation through the Baroque period. Italy was not a unified country, and would not be until the nineteenth century. Instead, during the medieval period, many city-states and kingdoms emerged in Italy, like Florence, Venice, and Siena. These cities often competed to have the status of having the biggest, and most splendid, art.

In the Renaissance period, when classical antiquity was lauded and emulated, art historians like Giorgio Vasari vilified and derided the art of the medieval period, calling it unsophisticated and lacking in skill, due to its unnaturalistic style. Therefore, the art of Greece and Rome, along with the Renaissance, were placed on pedestals while the art of the Middle Ages was regarded as inferior. However, it must be stated that the lack of naturalism that is predominant in medieval art should not be a sign of its inferiority. Rather, the artists during this time had different goals. Not every culture places a high premium on naturalism, and from 400-1400, most of the art in Europe is an example of that.

This less naturalistic style began to emerge during the Roman Empire. In medieval art, we continue to see how the proportions of figures are off, there is a lack of individuality, and there is usually no ground-line nor any accurate depiction of space. In addition, the figures are typically two-dimensional and flat, without any shading in light and dark to give them a sense of volume and mass. Furthermore, compositions are typically symmetrical.

In Rome, the medieval art that predominates are the frescoes and mosaics that decorate the many churches of the city. Elaborate and sumptuous, the mosaics cover the nave walls, the vaults, the apses, the triumphal arches, and other zones within the church. Because these decorate Christian churches, the subjects are also Christian, many centering around the Virgin Mary, Christ, and saints. Within these mosaics, though, the artists borrow pagan iconography from the Roman Empire. After all, pagan images abounded and the medieval artists would have seen examples of it throughout the city. While pagan iconography was used ubiquitously, it must be noted that it was transformed into a new Christian meaning. For example, grapes and chubby winged babies are often found in Roman art and referenced Bacchus and his attendants. In

Christian art, the babies become angels and the grapes are a symbol of the Eucharist.

Frescoes likewise have a pagan influence. From the walls of catacombs to the Early Christian churches of Rome, paintings continued to be used. By the end of the medieval period, a more naturalistic style was beginning to take hold, a foreshadowing of the Renaissance.

In terms of architecture, with the legalization of Christianity and new opportunity to build churches beginning in the fourth century CE, Constantine used the pagan basilica as his model for the new Christian church. With a long central nave flanked by side aisles, all leading to the apse where the priest would lead mass, the Christian basilica could accommodate the entire congregation and would be used throughout Europe. In Italy, Early Christian and medieval churches were characterized by their flat, coffered ceilings and their appropriation of ancient Roman building materials.

Important Medieval Popes

- St. Peter, 30/30-64/68
- St. Clement I, 88-99
- St. Callixtus I, 217-222
- St. Julius I, 337-352

A Brief History of Renaissance and Baroque Art in Rome

The power of the popes continued and increased during the Renaissance period, roughly the fifteenth through the sixteenth centuries. With their great wealth, the popes commissioned some of the world's best known artworks, including the Sistine Chapel. During the Renaissance, Italy continued to be made up of city-states, kingdoms, and the papal state.

The Renaissance began in Florence, Italy in the fourteenth century and blossomed in the 1400s, eventually spreading throughout the Italian peninsula and then to northern Europe. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the hub of the Renaissance had shifted to Rome, where the papacy and other important members of the clergy and aristocracy eagerly commissioned artworks and buildings.

After the Middle Ages, the Renaissance was a rebirth of antiquity and a was a time of renewed interest in ancient Greece and Rome. It was also a time that saw the rise of humanism, a popular philosophy that saw the potential of every human being and praised his accomplishments (his, because women still had a difficult time being successful outside the

home). As a result, the Renaissance became a time of the artistic genius. While few artists of the Middle Ages are known by name, the Renaissance, because of humanism, revered the great artists like Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Raphael.

In art and architecture, these artists were greatly influenced by ancient Greece and Rome. First, the style of Renaissance art was highly naturalistic. Unlike the two-dimensional figures of medieval frescoes and paintings, the people in Renaissance artworks were three-dimensional and modeled in light and dark. Proportions were also correct, they were neither short and stocky nor elongated. Artists observed the world around them empirically and wanted their paintings or sculptures to be a window into the world. In addition, most Italian Renaissance artists were obsessed with creating a realistic depiction of space, something that held little interest for a medieval artist. To create this recession, artists utilized different perspectival systems, including linear perspective, foreshortening, and atmospheric perspective. In short, Italian Renaissance art was all about illusionism and naturalism, like their Greek and Roman predecessors.

Because of the renewed interest in ancient Greece and Rome, many artists also studied ancient texts and mythology. Thus, classical mythology is often a subject of Italian Renaissance art. One need only to think of Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* or *Primavera* in the Uffizi for an example of this.

In architecture, many classical characteristics were borrowed and translated into a new Renaissance vocabulary. Pediments, entablatures, arches, coffers, the classical orders, and many other ancient Greek and Roman architectural elements can be seen in Renaissance architecture and representations of architecture in painting and sculpture.

During the Baroque era, or the seventeenth century, the papacy in Rome continued to dominate. However, its lavish spending created dissension in the Church and caused the Protestant Reformation. Disgusted by this spending, indulgences, corruption of the clergy and popes, and the worshipping of images, among many other things, in 1517 Martin Luther posted his ninety-nine theses to the door of Wittenberg Cathedral in Germany to break away from the Catholic Church, thus forming the Protestant (or Lutheran, as it is sometimes called) church.

The Catholic Church enacted a counter-attack, the Counter Reformation, in which they tried to bring people back into the fold of the true church. One way to do this was to create art that would be easy to understand and that would inspire. Thus, much of the art of the seventeenth century continued to be religious and propagandistic, as it was meant to bring those Protestants back into the Catholic Church.

Baroque art was also a reaction against the rationalism and logic of the Renaissance period. While it was still highly naturalistic, like the Renaissance, Baroque art was much more emotional. To that end, many artists often depicted the most dramatic part of the story heighten the drama and emotion, heightening the suspense. In addition, artists utilized chiaroscuro, which translates as "light" and "dark," to further emphasize drama, as if the scene was taking place on the stage. Chiaroscuro, with its dramatic contrast on light and dark, plunged the background into inky darkness while the main figures were highlighted by bright light, almost like a stage's spotlight.

Baroque architecture also exhibited many of these qualities. While still influenced by classical antiquity, there was a new sense of dynamism and movement, with undulating and moving facades and the viewer's experience of a space now more important.

Important Renaissance and Baroque Popes

- Sixtus IV
- Julius II/Giuliano della Rovere 1503-1513
- Paul III/Alessandro Farnese 1534-1549
- Urban VIII/Maffeo Barberini 1623-1644
- Innocent X/Giovanni Battista Pamphili 1644-1655
- Alexander VII/Fabrio Chigi 1655-1667

A Brief History of Modern Rome (18th to 20th Centuries)

During the eighteenth century, Rome was a huge tourist destination, especially for aristocrats taking their "Grand Tours" of Europe. Usually beginning in London or Paris, the goal of the Grand Tour was Italy. Travelers first stopped in Venice and Florence, but the most important place was Rome, where the tourists could admire the monuments of ancient, medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque Rome.

Artists, if their financial situations allowed it, also made their own artistic pilgrimages to Rome. One way to finance studies in Rome was for an artist to win the Prix de Rome, or Rome Prize, a prestigious award that provided funding for three to five years of studying and living in Rome, allowing artists to soak up their surroundings and the plethora of masterpieces that abounded within the city.

In addition, the eighteenth century witnessed the first systematic, modern archaeological excavations. In 1748, Herculaneum, and subsequently Pompeii, were discovered in the Bay of Naples. Buried by

the ash and lava for over a millennium, excavations enthusiastically uncovered these Roman towns that were filled with houses and an abundance of art. Some of these works made their way into royal and papal collections while others traveled further afield, returning home with the Grand Tourists when their trips were completed. Because of this, interest in antiquity and the classical world grew steadily in the eighteenth century and even helped influence the Neoclassical art movement.

In Rome, the eighteenth century saw the beginnings of public art museums. The papacy, afraid that many of the recently uncovered archaeological finds would be swooped up by others, started buying artworks for the papal collection in the Vatican. Pope Clement XIV also inaugurated a new museum in the Vatican in 1769, to protect these artworks and foster understanding of them. The museum displayed the Vatican's collection of ancient sculpture began by Pope Julius II in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Clement XIV greatly added to this collection, as did his successor, Pius VI. The resulting museum was named the Pio-Clementino, named after Clement and Pius.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Italy was occupied by the French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, who looted much of the country's art, absconding back to France with these treasures. Italy would subsequently be occupied from 1800-1814 by the French, with the Kingdom of Italy in the north and the Kingdom of the Holy Roman Empire in the south.

Following Napoleon's occupation and subsequent defeat, Italy returned to being a conglomeration of city-states and kingdoms. But there was increasing desire for an independent Italy. The period from 1796-1861 is referred to as the Risorgimento, which translates as "Rising Again." In 1861, a unified Italy was established and was coupled with a desire to glorify the new Italy and the country's connection to its illustrious past. Vittore Emanuele II was the first king of the newly unified Italy.

In the first half of the twentieth century, Italy was dominated by Fascism (1922 to 1946), led by Benito Mussolini. A veteran of World War I, Mussolini led the fascists, who promoted nationalism but were ultimately a right-wing group participating in terrorism and intimidation. Ultimately, Mussolini befriended Adolf Hitler and Italy and Germany were allies during the first part of World War II. But when Germany began to lose the war and the Allies invaded the peninsula, Italy switched sides and joined the Allies. Mussolini was executed after World War II and many fascist monuments and artworks were destroyed or renamed.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE ROMAN FORUM AND COLOSSEUM

Introduction

This chapter examines two of the most important sites of ancient Rome: the Forum Romanum, or Roman Forum, and the Colosseum. From its inception as a city, Rome utilized the marshy area between the Palatine and Capitoline Hills, first as a necropolis and then as the busy hub of the bustling city, with marketplaces, temples, and government buildings. Never lost to history, the Forum Romanum has always been a testament to the power of ancient Rome.

At the edge of the Forum Romanum, at the terminus of the Via Sacra, is the most iconic monument of the Roman Empire: the Flavian Amphitheater, or Colosseum. Constructed by the Flavian dynasty in the late first century CE, the Colosseum was the first permanent amphitheater in Rome and provided endless entertaining events for the citizens of the Eternal City.

The Roman Forum

At the heart of ancient Rome was the **Forum Romanum** (Figures 1.1 and 1.2), a large marketplace that was the central district of the city and included temples, basilicas, government buildings, and commemorative arches. Rome was not the only city in the ancient world to have a forum – this was a typical feature of any Roman town. During the expansion of the Roman Empire, mini-Romes were created when new territories and provinces were added. All these new "Romes" had fora within them.

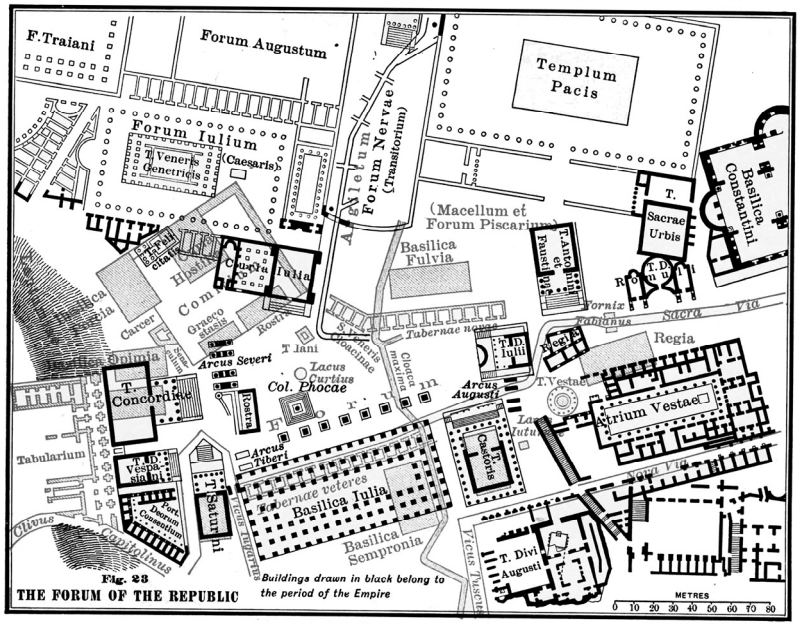

Figure 1.1: The Forum Romanum, Rome. Source: Public Domain.

The Forum Romanum is nestled in a plateau between the Palatine and Capitoline Hills. Before the forum was built, this area was a marshy swamp. By the eighth century BCE, the plateau was already in use as burial site for people who lived on the Palatine Hill. In the seventh century BCE, during the reigns of Tarquinius Superbus and Servius Tullius, the marsh was turned into a plateau by filling the swamp with a massive amount of dirt. From the seventh century BCE onward, the space was used as a marketplace for the city.

Nothing was ever built over the Forum Romanum (unlike the complicated Palatine Hill with its numerous renovations and rebuildings). As a result, a visit to the Forum Romanum reveals the development of the city from the time of the kings through the Republic and into the Roman Empire. Excavations at the Forum Romanum continue to this day, discovering new things about ancient Rome all the time.

Most visitors enter the Forum Romanum from the side entrance off the Via dei Fori Imperiali. This large boulevard was constructed by the fascist dictator, Benito Mussolini, from 1924-1932 (see Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of this street). The construction of this huge road was controversial because Mussolini, as he tried to highlight the glories of

ancient Rome, simultaneously destroyed many of those ancient monuments and remains.

Figure 1.2: Forum Romanum Reconstruction. Source: Mark Miller.

After descending into the Forum Romanum from the ramp off the Via dei Fori Imperiali, the visitor stands in one of the oldest roads of Rome, the **Via Sacra** or Sacred Way. This road stretches across the entire length of the Forum, from the Arch of Titus at the east to the Temple of Saturn at the west. In addition to connecting many of the most important monuments of the Forum Romanum, the Via Sacra was also an important part of the route of an emperor's triumphal procession, a grand celebration that honored the victorious leader. Following an important conquest, the emperor returned home with his spoils and captives, all of which were put on display for all citizens of Rome to see during the triumphal procession. People lined the streets to view the parade. Each triumphal procession followed a specific route, winding its way through Rome, past the Circus Maximus, through the Arch of Constantine and Arch of Titus, down the Via Sacra of the Forum Romanum, until it finally ascended to the top of the Capitoline Hill where the activity culminated at the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus.

Along the Via Sacra are many of the most important buildings in the entire Forum Romanum. Turning right after descending the ramp, the remains the **Basilica Aemelia** (Figure 1.3) are visible. In ancient Rome, a basilica was used for civic functions; the building had no religious function. (When Constantine legalized Christianity with the Edict of Milan in 313 CE, the emperor decided to use the pagan basilica as his model for

the early Christian churches that were constructed throughout the city. Therefore it was not until the fourth century and the legalization of Christianity that the pagan basilica obtained a religious function.)

There are three major basilicas within the Forum Romanum: the Basilica Aemelia, the Basilica Julia, and the Basilica of Constantine/Maxentius. Of these three, the Basilica Aemelia is the only one from the Republican period and it dates to 179 BCE. Despite the fact that the three basilicas were built during different time periods, all three rely on the same format. First, a basilica was typically rectangular or longitudinal in plan and very large. Inside, a basilica has a long central aisle called a nave. Flanking the nave are side aisles (usually one or two on either side) and these are delineated with columns. At the short ends were apses, or semi-circular sections. Basilicas were multi-storied and the upper level had a series of windows called a clerestory, which allowed light into the rest of the basilica. Many pagan basilicas, like the ones in the Forum Romanum, had flat, coffered ceilings.

Not much of the Basilica Aemelia remains except for the drums of the columns that were used to demarcate the side aisles, and thus, like many ruins within the Forum Romanum, a reconstruction is necessary to envisage its original grandeur. Originally, the Basilica Aemelia measured roughly 100 meters long by 30 meters wide and consisted of three stories. Along the street, when one viewed the Basilica Aemelia, the façade consisted of sixteen arches and there were three entrances.

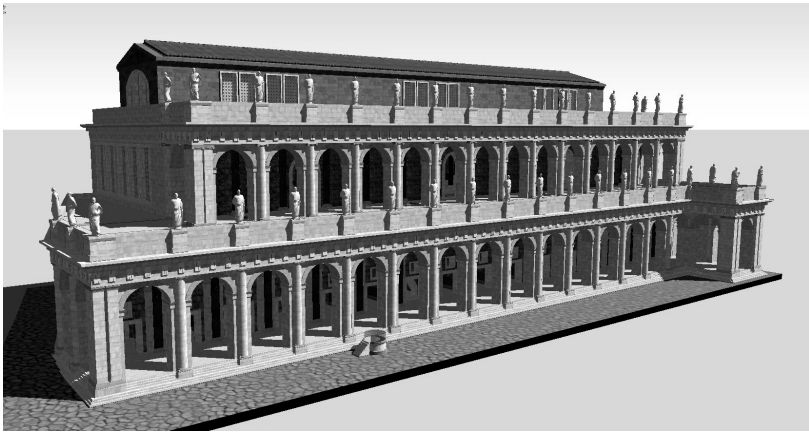

Figure 1.3: Reconstruction of the Basilica Aemelia. Source: L.VII.C., 2012.

West of the Basilica Aemelia is the political center of ancient Rome, which consisted of the **Curia Julia**, **Comitium**, and the imperial **Rostra**.

The **Curia Julia** (Figure 1.4) was the senate building. Made of brick, Julius Caesar started the building of the Curia in 52 BCE after a fire destroyed the earlier building. Octavian (who would become Augustus and was the adopted son of Julius Caesar) inaugurated the Curia Julia in 29 BCE, two years before becoming emperor. During the tetrarchy of the late third century, the Curia Julia was reconstructed again. Prior to World War II, during 1930-36, the Curia Julia was restored to the third century CE version, which is why the building is remarkably well-preserved today.

The Curia Julia is rectangular and the interior was large enough to accommodate all three hundred Roman senators. The interior is divided into three parts, with a long central aisle running along its long side. On either side of the central aisle were three tiers of seats where the senators would sit. At the end of the Curia, in between the two sections of seating, there was a podium where the presiding senator could speak (or later, the emperor). In the nineteenth century, the Italian painter Cesare Maccari envisioned the famous Catiline conspiracy, with Cicero denouncing Catiline, in a fresco from the Palazzo Madama in Rome. This gives us an idea of what a populated Curia Julia would look like in antiquity.

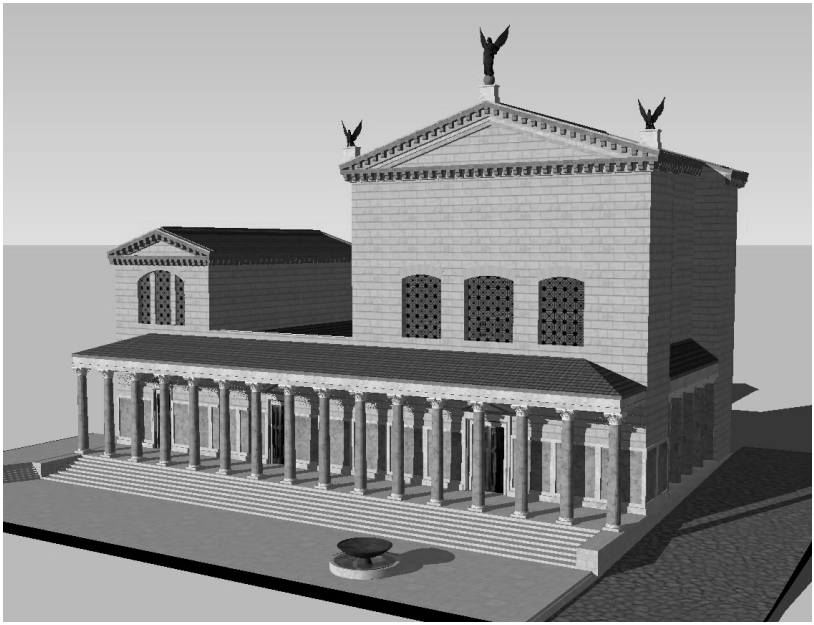

Figure 1.4: Reconstruction of the Curia Julia. Source: L.VII.C, 2012.